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CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TRICHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council Ali Shamkhani shakes hands with China's top diplomat Wang Yi as Saudi Arabia's National Security Advisor Musaad bin Mohammed al-Aiban looks on after signing the pact in Beijing on Friday | AP

Iran, Saudi Arabia bury hatchet in peace deal brokered by China

The agreement came on a day when Xi Jinping's third term as Chinese president was endorsed by the country's Parliament. Under the pact struck in Beijing on Friday, Shia-majority Iran and Sunni Saudi Arabia will reopen their embassies in each other's capitals in two months. Riyadh had cut ties with Tehran after Iranian protesters attacked Saudi missions in the Islamic republic in 2016 following Saudi execution of popular Shia cleric Nimr al-Nimr, along with 46 others | **P21**

G20
NAVA KARNATAKA
FOR NAVA BHARAT
Shri Narendra Modi
Hon'ble Prime Minister
Priority to Farm Mechanization and Soil Nutrient Management
• Under the 'Raitha Shakthi' scheme, a diesel subsidy of Rs. 250 per acre is given to a maximum of five acres.
• Rs. 400 crore has been provided for this scheme. So far, Rs. 387 crore has been released.
• 160 Mobile Plant Health Clinics have been opened to the public under the 'Krishi Sanjeevini' scheme for adequately managing pests, diseases and soil nutrient deficiency.
• The government opened 64 Mobile Plant Health Clinics for the public in 2022-23.
karnataka information
Shri Basavaraj S. Bommai
Hon'ble Chief Minister

PM FLAGS TEMPLE VANDALISM IN AUS BY KHALISTANIS

Holds talks with his Australian counterpart on enhancing security and economic engagements

YESHI SELI @New Delhi

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Friday shared with his Australian counterpart Anthony Albanese India's concern over the vandalism of temples across Australia by Khalistani elements, during their summit talks on a range of bilateral and global issues here.

"It is a matter of regret that attacks on temples have been regularly reported in Australia over the past few weeks. He has assured me that the safety of the Indian community is a special priority for him. Our teams will be in regular touch on this topic, and will cooperate as much as possible," Modi said.

The talks covered strategic convergence and common interests between the two countries, including in the Indo-Pacific region.

"Security cooperation is an important pillar of our Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. We had detailed discussions on maritime security in the Indo-Pacific region, and ways to increase mutual defence and security cooperation. To enhance contact and friendship among our young soldiers, we have established the General Rawat Officers Exchange Programme, which has started this month," the prime minister added.

Prime Ministers Narendra Modi and Anthony Albanese before their meeting in New Delhi on Friday | SHEKHAR YADAV

On education, Modi said the two sides have signed a mechanism for mutual recognition of educational qualifications. "We are also moving forward on the Mobility Agreement. It will be beneficial for students, workers, and professionals."

The Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA) that was implemented last year, has opened up better opportunities for trade and investment between the two countries, he said, adding both sides are now working on arriving at a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA). The CECA will be a transformational deal that will create new jobs and opportunities in both countries.

Albanese said, "Building a stronger partnership with India will deliver tangible benefits for Australia in trade and investment, education, renewable energy, defence, security and culture."

Modi will attend the Quad Summit in May in Australia, following which the two leaders will meet again in India in September for the G20 Summit.

OFF SPIN, ON TARGET

Ashwin's guile, Khawaja's patience and Green's belligerence... A look at the dominant personalities on Day 2 of the fourth Test of the series | **P19**

Khawaja and Green make merry

The visitors needed big runs to ensure against defeat in Ahmedabad and they may have done that thanks to Usman Khawaja and Cameron Green who put on 200 runs for the 5th wicket

Ashwin serves up another big performance

R Ashwin played some of his greatest hits — variation, speeds, flights, trajectories and angles — to pick up a six-wicket haul on one of the best batting days of the series to restrict the tourists to 480

Taking pitch out of equation

While other bowlers went for a combined 1/191 in 55 overs, Ashwin picked 5/34 in his 22.2 overs on Friday

113

Another record where the off-spinner went past Kumble. With his show on Day 2, Ashwin has the most number of wickets for India against Australia in Tests

26

Ashwin went past Anil Kumble's 25 five-wicket hauls to register most number of fifers by an Indian. It is also the joint-second highest at home. Lanka's Herath shares the mark

R Ashwin took 6/91 in the first innings to keep India in control of the game | PTI

BIG SATURDAY IN PROSPECT

The strip is expected to stay true for another day, the hosts will at least hope that's the case as they chase a mountain of runs to restore parity in the Test. If they bat right through Saturday, they can have designs of winning a 16th consecutive home series. However, their goal is to win as it guarantees their qualification to the final of the World Test Championship

K'taka logs India's 1st H3N2 death

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Hassan/Bengaluru

KARNATAKA has reported the country's first death due to the H3N2 influenza virus, said the state health department. The victim has been identified as 87-year-old Eregowda from Alur taluk in Hassan district.

Officials from the Union Health Ministry and the Karnataka state health department said on Friday that Eregowda died on March 1. Karnataka had also reported the first Covid19 death in India. A 76-year-old man from Kalaburagi died on March 10, 2020, and it was reported on March 12, after a thorough assessment.

"Even though the deaths occurred much earlier, they had been announced after a thorough analysis of samples," said officials from the health ministry.

Dr Shivaswamy B N, Hassan District Health Officer (DHO), told The *New Indian Express that* Eregowda was admitted to Hassan Institute of Medical Sciences (HIMS) with Influenza-like Infection (ILI) and Severe Acute Respiratory Infections (SARI) on February 24.

He was suffering from fever, cough and breathlessness. He had cough for five days and breathlessness for three days. He was declared dead on March 1. The patient was asthmatic and suffered from hypertension. He even had an acute kidney injury.

CONTINUED ON: P5

Cancer patient in Haryana second fatality

The second H3N2 fatality in the country was in Haryana's Jind, where a 56-year-old male cancer patient died on March 8. He had tested positive for H3N2 in January at PGIMS hospital in Rohtak. The rise in influenza cases has triggered concern as it spreads fast like Covid-19.

Govt plans 12k Vivekananda SHGs to attract young voters

ASHWINI M SRIPAD @Bengaluru

AHEAD of assembly elections, the state government has issued an order to constitute 12,000 Vivekananda self-help groups (SHGs), two each at the gram panchayat level. With this, the government is reaching out to the youth population and it is expected to help the ruling party attract young voters, especially in rural areas.

As per data, in Karnataka, there were 15 lakh voters aged below 20 in 2018, and eight lakh in 2013. Now, the number of such voters has increased substantially. Also, this time, as per the data of chief electoral officer of Karnataka, around seven lakh first-time voters have been enrolled and registered. The number of such voters was four lakh in 2018. Political parties are now targeting this segment of voters and make them their members. In Karnataka, there are 6,000 gram panchayats. The Department of Youth Empowerment and Sports issued an order which says, earlier it had proposed to constitute one Vivekananda SHG in each panchayat. Now, the Department of Finance has given clearance to have two such groups in each panchayat. With this, there will be 12,000 such groups across the state. **P4**

CIVIC APATHY

Eight villages in Uttara Kannada to boycott polls

SUBHASH CHANDRA NS @Karwar

PEOPLE of eight villages in Uttara Kannada district have threatened to boycott the assembly elections in protest against lack of basic amenities in their villages.

Halkadi, Hosakoppa and Kodsur villages in Sirsi taluk are facing a severe shortage of drinking water. Political parties had promised the people of these villages that they would tackle the water crisis and provide other amenities if they voted them to power during the last elections. But the promises have not been fulfilled. This has angered the villagers. "Let them come seeking votes this time, we will give them a proper dressing down. Everytime, they fool us by making empty promises," said Manjunath Naik, a villager.

These villages are in the forest area and lack amenities such as roads, water, schools and toilets. Upset with the attitude of the politicians, people have banned their entry into their villages. They have put up banners stating that "Politicians are not welcome here" and "Give us roads and then seek votes".

Two villages in Nandigadda GP limits in Joida taluk and two more in Haliyal GP limits have decided to boycott elections. These villages lack roads, transport, and drinking water. "If leaders are unable to provide basic amenities, they are unfit to be in power. We have decided not to exercise our franchisee this time," said Suraj Dabgar, a villager.

ED searches Tejashwi's Delhi house, other locations linked to Lalu family

AMIT MUKHERJEE & RAMASHANKAR @New Delhi / Patna

THE Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday conducted searches in multiple cities of Bihar, Delhi NCR, Mumbai and other locations associated with RJD chief Lalu Prasad Yadav as part of its probe into the money laundering angle in the land-for-jobs scam.

The searches were conducted at Lalu Prasad's son and Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav's Friends Colony residence in New Delhi, besides the premises of his daughters Ragini Yadav, Chanda Yadav and Hema Yadav.

Tejashwi was present at his Friends Colony residence when the ED sleuths knocked at the door. He had gone to New Delhi soon after Lalu was questioned by the CBI on March 7.

The premises of former RJD MLA Abu Dojana were also searched. Sources said cash and property documents were recovered from the former MLA's house. Dojana is a close associate of Lalu and his company, Meridian Construction India Limited, was constructing a mall belonging to Lalu and family. The ED had seized the mall in 2018.

The searches come close of the heels of the questioning of Lalu Prasad and his wife, former Bihar chief minister Rabri Devi, by the CBI in Patna and New Delhi.

The ED's action is a follow-up of the investigation by the CBI on the acquisition of illegal assets by the Yadav family using the proceeds from land-for-jobs scam. The CBI had filed a chargesheet in the matter in October last year. Further investigations are on.

According to ED sources, the federal agency raided 24 locations in Bihar, Delhi NCR, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand and Haryana associated with Lalu Yadav, his relatives and close associates for possessing assets disproportionate to known sources of income.

In October last year, the CBI filed a chargesheet against Lalu Prasad, his wife Rabri Devi and 14 others in connection with the land-for-jobs scam case. The alleged scam took place when Lalu Prasad was the Union railway minister in the UPA-1 government during 2004-2009.

LAND-FOR-JOBS SCAM

Several persons allegedly gifted or sold their land at huge discount to the Lalu family in exchange for railway jobs. They were allegedly appointed as substitutes in group D positions and were later regularised

BMTC bus catches fire, sleeping conductor charred to death

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

IN a shocking incident, a 43-year-old BMTC conductor was charred to death when the bus in which he was sleeping caught fire. The incident happened at Group D Employees' Layout bus stand at Lingadheeranahalli in Byadarahalli police station limits around 4.45 am Friday.

The reason for the fire is yet to be ascertained. BMTC officials stated that there was no problem with the bus and it was in best running condition. But, the police are not ruling out the possibility of some foul play. The incident was noticed by night beat policemen.

The victim has been identified as **Muthaiah alias Muthaiah Swamy**, a resident of Bagalkot. He joined BMTC 14 years ago. He was sleeping in the bus attached to Sumanahalli Depot No. 31. He was the conductor of the bus route No 243L/1 plying between Lingadheeranahalli and Majestic.

The BMTC made arrangements at the bus stop for the driver and conductor to sleep after work. **P5**

EXPRESS READ

In a big boost, Sumalatha backs PM Modi, BJP

MYSURU: Mandya independent MP Sumalatha Ambareesh announced her support for Prime Minister Narendra Modi and BJP, which comes as a big boost to the party which is trying to gain traction in the Vokkaliga bastion. **P4**

Circular on assessment of Class 5, 8 students junked

BENGALURU: The Karnataka High Court on Friday quashed the circular issued by the Department of School Education and Literacy to change the assessment method for Classes 5 and 8 students for the academic year 2022-23. **P2**

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